VOL. IV. Numb. 19.

The British Apollo:

OR,

Curious Amuſements for the INGENIOUS.

Perform'd by a SOCIETY of GENTLEMEN.

From Monday May 7th. to Wedneſday May 9th. 1711.

GENTLEMEN,

Q. *THAT Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion is, I think, though not univerſally, yet very often a true Maxim; for whoever obſerves the Temper and Diſpoſition of many People towards Piety will find that it is generally the Effect of a credulous Simplicity, and that they are not inclin'd to it from Principles of Underſtanding and a ſincere Love of Truth. For this Reaſon I cannot be an Enemy to thoſe pious Frauds that have been often practiced with good Succeſs by the Church of* Rome *upon her People, as by the pretended ſweating and moving of Images, Spurious Reliques of Saints, feigned Legends of Miracles and Apparitions of Saints and the like, by which Arts many have been brought over to the Practice of Devotion, upon whom all real and rational Arguments had been ineffectual. Now, my Queſtion is, whether the practice of ſuch Frauds with a Deſign to captivate Men to Piety be any Offence againſt God? and if it is not, why may not we hope for the ſame Succeſs from them in the Church of* England *if put in Practice, as they have had in the Church of* Rome?

A. Without determining any Thing concerning the Lawfulneſs of pious Frauds, it is ſufficient to obſerve that we cannot promiſe to our ſelves any great Succeſs from them, but rather the contrary in this Age that abounds ſo much with free Thinkers, who wou'd take a Pleaſure in detecting ſuch Frauds and weakening the Force of Religion thereby, by inſinuating that the whole of it is in like manner a Cheat. To this we add, That Religion has no need of ſuch Arts to procure its Reception in the Minds of Men: It is a Soil of itſelf productive of the Fruits of Righteouſneſs of its own native Heat and Strength. Let but Men be earneſtly called to a ſerious Attendance to thoſe mighty Arguments wrapt up in the Life, Miracles, Death and Reſurrection of our Lord, the Rewards of Virtue propoſed in Scripture greater than their Thoughts can conceive, the Certainty and Severity of a Judgment to come, the apparent Folly of every ſinful Choice, and the great Correſpondence of all the Duties incumbent on us to the natural Notions we have of what is fit and juſt; and we ſhall find theſe conſecrated Weapons of infinite more Force againſt the Powers of Darkneſs than all the Wit and Subtilty of Man can ſupply us with. Beſides how vain muſt it needs be to pretend to be wiſer than God, or to caſt about for other Inſtruments to advance his Worſhip, than thoſe his infinite Wiſdom has ſupplied us with? How raſh and impious to think his Intereſt might be managed with greater Advantage if he wou'd be adviſed by us, and not truſt it wholly with thoſe unpromiſing Means of his own Appointment?

Q. Gentlemen, *The modern Aſtronomers obſerve, that when the Planet* Venus *begins its Retrogreſſion from the Sun towards the Eaſt, and when its Elongation from the Sun is but very ſmall, it is bigger than uſual; but when it advances towards the Sun, and its Elongation from it is again but ſmall, it is leſs. On the contrary, when it departs from the Sun towards the Weſt, it is obſerved to be leſs; but when again it approaches towards the Sun, it is bigger. This is ſo ſtrange a* Phænomenon *that it well deſerves your examining it to the Reaſon of it.*

A. This Phænomenon is both a Proof and a neceſſary Conſequence of *Venus*'s being an inferior Planet to the Earth, and having the Sun for the Center of its Orbit; and alſo of its being of a Spherical Figure, an opake Body, and illuminated by the Sun as our Earth is. For from theſe Conſiderations it neceſſarily follows, that that Hemiſphere of the Planet which is obverted towards the Sun will be enlightened by it, but the contrary one will be dark. And ſince one of its Hemiſpheres is always obverted toward the Earth, if we conſider what Part of it muſt be enlightened in its various Poſition with Reſpect to the Sun, and what Part with Reſpect to the Earth moving alſo in its Orbit; it is manifeſt that when *Venus* is moſt retrograde and therefore neareſt to us it will not be ſeen by us at all, as having its dark Hemiſphere towards us, juſt as the Moon has at its Change: And if at the ſame Time it is in the Plane of the Ecliptick, or in its *Node*, then it is directly interpoſed between the Earth and the Sun, and will appear to Obſervers as a Spot in the Sun. When it has departed a little from the Sun towards the Weſt, a ſmall Part of its Hemiſphere will begin to appear, but the greater Part remain ſtill obſcure; in this Caſe it will be cornuted like the New Moon at its firſt Appearance. In its farther Progreſs it will be daily more and more enlightened and appear therefore bigger with Reſpect to us, as the Moon does, till at laſt its whole Hemiſphere appears to us enlightened, and then it is at the greateſt Diſtance from us. After this it is eaſy to conceive what Variety of Faces it muſt undergo before it becomes wholly dark again, and has finiſhed its periodical Courſe.

Q. Gentlemen, *I need not inform you, how much the* Italian *Muſic is encourag'd of late (I mean not the Inſtrumental) for that hath been ſo long and doubtleſs with much Reaſon) but the Vocal alſo. Now, I pretend to have ſome Taſt in Muſic, but cannot be ſo delighted with their Vocal, becauſe I cannot deſcern the Skill of their Maſters in the Compoſure, by Reaſon I underſtand not the Language. Now, all that ever I convers'd with, are of my Opinion, that the greateſt Beauties of Vocal Muſic conſiſt in juſtly adapting the Notes and Strains to the Words and Senſe; ſo that the Muſic ought not only to ſpeak the very Words, but alſo their Affections (if I may ſo term it) That when the Words ſhare Complainant, Majeſtical, Commandant, ſoft, perſuaſive, &c. the Muſic ought to be the ſame, and to put an Emphaſis on the ſtrongeſt part of the Senſe. I have heard divers highly applaud the* Italian *Compoſitions of that kind,*

when I am ſenſible they underſtand the Language no more than I do, which is very unaccountable to me. Pray, inform me, Apollo, *if theſe People have any peculiar Ways to arrive to a Taſt therein, that gives them ſo much Satisfaction, if ſuch be attainable, you will very much oblige, by a Diſcovery of them,*

Your Humble Servant, &c.

A. 'Tis obſervable at Plays, where a Knot of Critics are got together, to pronounce the Fate of that at preſent perform'd, they ſhall be ſurrounded by the *would-be-Wits*, who liſten to their Sentence, and then tell it about the Town with much Aſſurance for their own. The next time it is plaid, they ſhall drag thither what Friends they can with them, and all along make their *borrow'd* Remarks upon them, tho' they really know no other Reaſon why they do ſo, then that they obſerv'd thoſe who are allow'd Judgment, to have done the ſame: Thus it is with the *Italian Opera's*. Some few who have been in *Italy*, or rather a few of them who have been there, and have a juſt Taſt in Muſic, paſs their Senſe on it, on which all the reſt (who remark'd their Sentence) tell it about for their own, when the greateſt part of thoſe who cry up the *Italian* Compoſitions are ſo far from a true Taſt in them, that did our own Maſters ſet *Italian* Words, they wou'd not be capable without Information, to diſtinguiſh theirs from the *Italian Manner*. Theſe Notions paſs about more uncontroulable, becauſe they come often from the *Fair Sex*; and tho' Men of Senſe eaſily diſcover the Diſtuſion, yet they are better bred than to detect it.

Yet you ſhall have what you deſerve,
Which is to beg with her, or Starve,
For I'll diſown you for my Son,
And fix all my Eſtate to run,
To other Heir, altho' he be,
My Profeſs'd, mortal Enemy.
With that he left me in a Rage,
And bid me weigh how I engage.
O Indulgent God, for pity's Sake,
Inform what Courſes I ſhall take;
If I to Silvia *falſe ſhall prove,*
Falſe to my tender Vows of Love,
It will Diſhoneſt be, and Baſe,
And inſupportable Diſgrace:
Nay, loaded with Diſhonour, I
Shall drag a Life in Miſery;
With endleſs Torments in my Breaſt,
Since ſhe's of all my Heart poſſeſt:
And if my Sire *I diſobey,*
We both are ruin'd to that Way,
For Silvia *(ſo hard is our Fate)*
Has ev'ry Bleſſing, but Eſtate.

A. Your Sire altho' he has the Pow'r,
To Diſinherit you next Hour,
Yet Heav'n does not ſuch Pow'r impart,
That he can diſengage your Heart,
A *Negative* he only may
Pretend to, which you muſt obey.
Then ſince at preſent he denies
Conſent and your Intreaties flies;
We only Patience can adviſe:
Till Heaven, in Pity to your State,
Has ſhorten'd him, or chang'd your Fate.

POEMS.

Q. *AS all approach* APOLLO's *Shrine,*
Their future Fortunes to divine,
As well as preſent Doubts to ask,
For once I'll ſet the God *a Task.*
A Nymph *that's Witty, Fair and Kind*
With ev'ry Grace, to pleaſe my Mind;
Adorn'd by Nature and by Art,
With all, to captivate an Heart:
Hath long on mine a ſeizure made,
And Victory compleat diſplay'd;
Nor have I Reaſon to complain,
Since my Addreſs *is not in vain;*
For ſhe at length to gracious proves,
As to confeſs he ſelf, ſhe Loves:
But ah! tho' ſhe acknowledg'd this,
Far diſtant ſeems the promis'd Bliſs,
For when Conſent Paternal, I
Hop'd, and upon it did rely;
With Anger 'twas, and with a Frown
Deny'd, and all my Joys thrown down:
For in a Rage, my Cruel Sire,
(His Eyes ejecting Sparks of Fire)
Moſt ſolemnly and loudly ſwore,
If e'er I mov'd the Queſtion more,
He wou'd renounce me for his Son,
And then I'm certainly undone:
But when his Paſſion was allay'd,
A kinder Aſpect he diſplay'd:
And ſaid if you'll allow my Choice,
And join yours with your Father's Voice,
A Lady I will name with whom,
You will much happier become;
Since ſhe has Beauty and Eſtate,
And's worthy'r of a nobler Mate.
My Fortune too ſhall added be,
When you and Cellida *agree:*
But if you Silvia *ſee again,*
All your Submiſſion is in vain,

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